

Youth in Australia speak out against war, promote IYSSE global anti-war webinar

Our reporters

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International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) members have been campaigning around Australia for the global online webinar, “For a mass movement of youth and students to stop the war in Ukraine!” The webinar, hosted by the IYSSE, will take place at 5 a.m. (AEDT) on Sunday, December 11, and will see socialists from around the world putting forward a revolutionary perspective to end imperialist war.

IYSSE campaigners have spoken with students, youth and workers at university campuses, high schools and train stations around the country, highlighting the threat of nuclear catastrophe driven by US-led militarism around the world. They have discussed the political perspective outlined in the IYSSE statement, “A call to youth throughout the world: Build a mass movement to stop the Ukraine war!”

In Melbourne, IYSSE members spoke with students at RMIT University, who expressed deep concern over the possibility of nuclear war, and opposition to the criminal operations of US imperialism over the last three decades.

Kiran, a civil engineering student from India, spoke on the hypocritical invocation of “human rights” by the US and its NATO allies in justifying their war against Russia in Ukraine.

“Even though the US is supposed to be a leading democracy, I don’t think their principles today are democratic at all. They are trying to be the superpower of the world. They should stop this. The war must stop immediately. They should pursue peace, but they have their own interests which are more important to them,” he said.

The student denounced illegal US wars in the Middle East: “If you look at Afghanistan, they stayed there for 20 years for nothing. The same goes with the wars in

Syria and Iraq. The US says that it was there to help, but they ended up killing civilians instead of terrorists. I personally think this was not ‘collateral damage,’ it was completely intentional. I blame the US also for what is happening now in Yemen. It is determined to dominate the world.”

Kiran also drew the connection between war abroad and the assault on the working class at home.

“Governments are focusing on war instead of improving the quality of human life in their own countries, protecting public health, and addressing climate change,” he said. “The US is focusing on war and escalation instead of stopping the conflict and reaching a peace. They should be more concerned about their massive student debt problem and lowering medical expenses so that more people would be able to afford basic medical care.”

John, an international student from Bangladesh, said, “There is no sense in starting a war in the 21st century. It’s insane. Most people want peace, and each individual should have the prospect of a better life. There is no point in killing masses of people, what does it achieve for the majority of us?”

On the social destruction war causes, John said: “In Bangladesh, we have suffered a lot from the huge socioeconomic impact of war: famine, scarcity of food. This cannot be allowed to happen on a world scale, and with nuclear weapons.”

The student also noted that the current conflict in eastern Europe is the outcome of decades of US-led wars.

“The problem did not start with the Ukraine war,” John said. “In my lifetime, there have been years and years of wars in the Middle East. We must not forget how people in those countries are suffering from what was done to them. We need to have collective actions

against war, to stop them from happening. Young people have to do their bit, because nuclear war would be a disaster for everyone.”

Tristan, a high school student in Geelong, 50 kilometres southwest of Melbourne, said in a statement sent to the IYSSE: “Tensions between nations with nuclear capabilities has drastically and rapidly increased, threatening the lives of billions. The only class which benefits from the damage done by these horrifying weapons of mass destruction is the capitalist class. While the capitalist war profiteers are rolling in cash, it is ordinary people who pay the ultimate price of war.”

The student said that the ruling elite uses nationalism to justify war by “dividing and maintaining control” over workers. He also noted the use of war as a method to “distract from internal issues” by attempting to rally workers against a “foreign enemy.”

“An opposition movement to any potential for war is becoming increasingly crucial for the survival of the working-class people. Only when the working-class people unite to reject the rise of war can we ensure that we do not become the sacrificial lambs of interests of the capitalist classes,” Tristan concluded.

The executive committee of the IYSSE club at Western Sydney University (WSU) made a video statement calling on young people around Australia to register and attend the IYSSE webinar.

In the video, the students highlight the IYSSE’s principled stand against the reactionary invasion of Ukraine by the Russian government of Vladimir Putin. However, they also oppose the position of so-called “left-wing” organisations, such as Socialist Alternative, who have seized on the invasion to align themselves with US imperialism.

“We oppose the invasion from the socialist left, not the pro-imperialist right,” said IYSSE executive member Mané. “We condemn all the pseudo-left and fake socialists who use ‘Ukrainian sovereignty’ as an excuse for the imperialists to arm Ukraine. They are the biggest cheerleaders for war today.”

Another IYSSE executive member, Zach, says: “Pessimists claim that nothing can be done, but we are optimistic about the future. Our optimism comes from the scientific understanding that the working class is the revolutionary class in society. The same processes that lead to war lead workers into struggle around the

world.”

In regional New South Wales, Youp, a student at the University of Newcastle, submitted a video explaining why he is attending the webinar. He said, “I am against war, as many others are. I also believe that international socialism is the only way to end war for good.”

Youp raised that the industrial slaughter of World War I was only ended by the 1917 October Revolution in Russia. That revolutionary struggle of Russian workers was the opening shot of an international upsurge of the working class against the war and the capitalist profit system that caused it.

He continued, “It’s evident to me that capitalism is the source of war through national divisions which only benefit the ruling class and their profits. So the question becomes, how do we instate socialism? The answer to that is revolution again, as history has shown, and we will achieve this by building a mass movement of students and workers.”

Register here to attend the IYSSE global online webinar, “For a mass movement of youth and students to stop the war in Ukraine!” on Sunday 11 December, 5:00 a.m. (AEDT)



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